

## THE EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE ON TEENS

Mr. Fasal Rehman\* | Dr. Venu Lata Saxena\*\* | Dr. Greesha Jose\*\*\*

\*Research Scholar in Himalayan University, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

\*\*Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

\*\*\*Principal, Indira Nursing College, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.47211/tg.2022.v09i01.003>

## ABSTRACT

Teenagers often experiment with a variety of activities and substances. Drug addiction has become a worldwide problem, especially in teenagers. Many young people become dependent on different types substances and stimulating medicines that comes hand-in-hand with narcotic effect. The life of addicts becomes spoiled in all aspects, as they lose contact with their family and live in a different world. They spend lots of money on drugs, and then look for ways to earn money illegally. If we compare the health problems, there are many dangerous effects of drugs.

**Key Words:** *drug abuse, teenagers, drug addiction.*

## ABOUT AUTHORS:



Author, Mr. Fasal Rehman is a Ph.D. Scholar at Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India.



Author, Dr. Venu Lata Saxena is Ph.D. Guide at Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India. She is active researcher with many publications in his name. She has attended and organized various National and International conferences.



Author, Dr. Greesha Jose is Principal, Indira Nursing College, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

## INTRODUCTION

Teenagers often experiment with a variety of activities and substances. Unfortunately, this experimentation can lead to substance abuse and addiction. Statistics show that drug abuse is a growing problem among teens. In addition to cocaine, Ecstasy and other club drugs, a recent Monitoring the Future Study showed that the top six most abused drugs by teens are: marijuana (31.5%), Vicodin (9.7%), amphetamines (8.1%), cough medicine (6.9%), sedatives & tranquilizers (6.6% each). Without treatment, the effects of drug abuse on teens can lead to serious consequences now and well into adulthood.<sup>1</sup>

The pioneering research of Jay Giedd and colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health has produced evidence that the brain is still developing during adolescence and young adulthood. The brain grows an excessive number of connections between brain cells prior to adolescence, but at about age 11 or 12, the brain begins the processing of sculpting or pruning-back a significant proportion of these connections. This pruning is a healthy process because it clears out unused wiring to make room for faster and potentially more efficient information processing. Also, pruning helps the brain to build the longer chains of nerve cells needed during adulthood for complex decision making. The pruning process appears to follow two general principles. One of the principle is that use-it-or-lose-it, the nerve cells that are frequently used during childhood are strengthened and the ones that are not activated or are infrequently used are eliminated.<sup>2</sup>

The second principle about the pruning process is that it tends to occur in the direction of back to front of the brain. The front area of the brain, particularly the pre-frontal cortex, is referred to as the CEO of the brain. It is associated with logical reasoning and regulating impulses, and is the area believed to be primarily associated with guiding decisions that a person makes<sup>4</sup>. During adolescent brain development, it is believed that the brain regions located further back, particularly the limbic region – which is associated with processing emotions and memories – matures earlier than the pre-frontal cortex region. As psychologist David Walsh writes, it is as if a teenager's brain has a fully functional car accelerator but the brakes have not been installed yet

Scientists caution against drawing definite conclusions about the direct impact of brain development on adolescent behaviour<sup>2</sup>. Human behaviour has to also be considered in the context of social and cultural factors. However, it has been suggested that the non-uniform maturation pattern in which the limbic region (emotions) develops faster than the cortex region (reasoning) may significantly contribute to an increase in risk taking and novelty seeking by youth, particularly young teenagers. Whereas risk taking during the teenage years may be normative and functionally adaptive as the adolescent strives for independence from adults, such behaviors may also contribute to an incentive to initiate drug use. Given the unique neurodevelopmental processes taking place during adolescence, trying out new experiences and taking risks (including drug use) is more likely among teenagers than among children and adults.

### Signs of Teen Drug Abuse<sup>5</sup>

Some of the most common signs of teen with abusing drugs are:

- Violation of law such as DUI, breaking curfew, stealing, etc.
- School problems such as excessive tardiness, poor grades, suspension, etc.
- Mood swings
- Loss of interest in favourite activities
- Drug paraphernalia
- Violent behaviour
- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Poor hygiene
- Money stealing

### Effects of Drug Abuse on Teens

Drug abuse at any age can cause serious health effects, but teens who abuse drugs are at particular risk for negative consequences. Teens who abuse drugs are more likely to struggle with addiction later in life and have permanent and irreversible brain damage. Some other common negative effects of teen drug abuse are<sup>5</sup>:

1. Emotional problems: Drug abuse can cause or mask emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, mood swings, suicidal thoughts and schizophrenia. In fact, among teens with major depression, 34.6 % report is by using drugs. Unfortunately, drug use can also increase the severity of these emotional problems
2. Behavioral problems: Teens have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence. According to a recent survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed that, the teens who abuse drugs are more likely than teens who don't abuse drugs to engage in delinquent behaviors such as fighting and stealing.

3. Addiction and dependence: Studies prove that the use of drugs in younger age is more likely they are to develop a substance abuse problem and relapse later in life.
4. Risky sex: Teens that use drugs are five times more likely to have sex than teens who don't use drugs, and are more likely to have unprotected sex and have sex with a stranger. This leads to higher risks of STDs, teen pregnancy and sexual assault.
5. Learning problems: Drug abuse damages short-term and long-term memory and can lead to problems with learning and memory later in life.
6. Diseases: Teens who abuse drugs with needles increase their risk of blood-borne diseases like HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis B and C.
7. Brain damage: Drug abuse among teens can result in serious mental disorders or permanent, irreversible damage to the brain or nervous system, such as brain shrinkage, impaired learning abilities, amnesia and memory problems, impaired reasoning, perception and intuition, increased or decreased socialization, and changes in sexual desire.
8. Accidents: Teenagers who abuse drugs are more likely to be involved in accident-related injuries or death. One study showed that 4 to 14% of drivers who are injured or die in traffic accidents test positive for cannabis use.

#### **Is drug use in young people be prevented?**

Drug use and addiction are preventable among adolescents. Prevention programs includes education and outreach to help people understand the risks of drug use involving families, schools, communities, and the media may prevent or reduce drug use and addiction<sup>6</sup>.

Following ways used to prevent using drugs:

- Effective communication with adolescent
- Encouragement can build confidence and a strong sense of self. It also helps parents promote cooperation and reduce conflict.
- Teach appropriate problem-solving skills
- Setting limits: to teach self-control and responsibility, provide safe boundaries, and show them that they are cared
- Supervision, which helps parents to recognize developing problems, promote safety, and stay involved

#### **REFERENCES**

1. <https://casapalmera.com/blog/the-effects-of-drug-abuse-on-teens/>
2. Giedd JN. Structural magnetic resonance imaging of the adolescent brain. Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2004 Jun; 1021():77-85.
3. Wallis C. What makes teens tick? Time. 2004 May 10;163:57-65.
4. Gogtay N, Giedd JN, Lusk L, Hayashi KM, et al, Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2004 May 25; 101(21):8174-9.
5. Steinberg L. Risk taking in adolescence: what changes, and why?, Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2004 Jun; 1021():51-8.
6. Emily Patry, Ravi Upadhyay, Jeffrey Bratberg, Ashley Buchanan, Kelly L Matson . A Comparison of National, State, and Local Drug Use Surveys: The Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Rx for Addiction and Medication Safety Program: R I Med J (2013), 105(1):20-25.